

MONTANA
Department of Commerce

MONTANA PROMOTION DIVISION

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EXHIBIT 4
DATE 1/19/2009
HB 84

January 16, 2009

Chairman Mike Milburn
House Natural Resources Committee
State Capitol
Helena MT 59620-0801

Dear Chairman Milburn and House Natural Resources Committee Members:

The Tourism Advisory Council is a proponent for HB 84 to "Extend the duration of fire emergency" declarations. The affects of multiple fire declarations throughout the summer season does have a negative impact for visitation to our state.

The bulk of the fire season falls during the busy summer tourist season when many of Montana's small businesses make a majority of their revenue. Any catastrophic event that occurs during this small window of opportunity can make the difference between success and failure. During past fire seasons, we have found that proclaiming multiple fire emergencies has a negative affect on businesses, even on those not in the proximity of the fire. Many visitors are not familiar with the geography of our state and when a "state of emergency" is declared they may cancel their trip without realizing the fire is not impacting the area they wish to visit. Often times the national news media will pick up the story and that further discourages visitation to Montana.

We feel this issue is vital to the continued success of the tourism industry and that passage of this legislation will help to reduce concerns and confusion by potential visitors.

I can be reached at (406) 228-9336 or by email at ozarkstan@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,



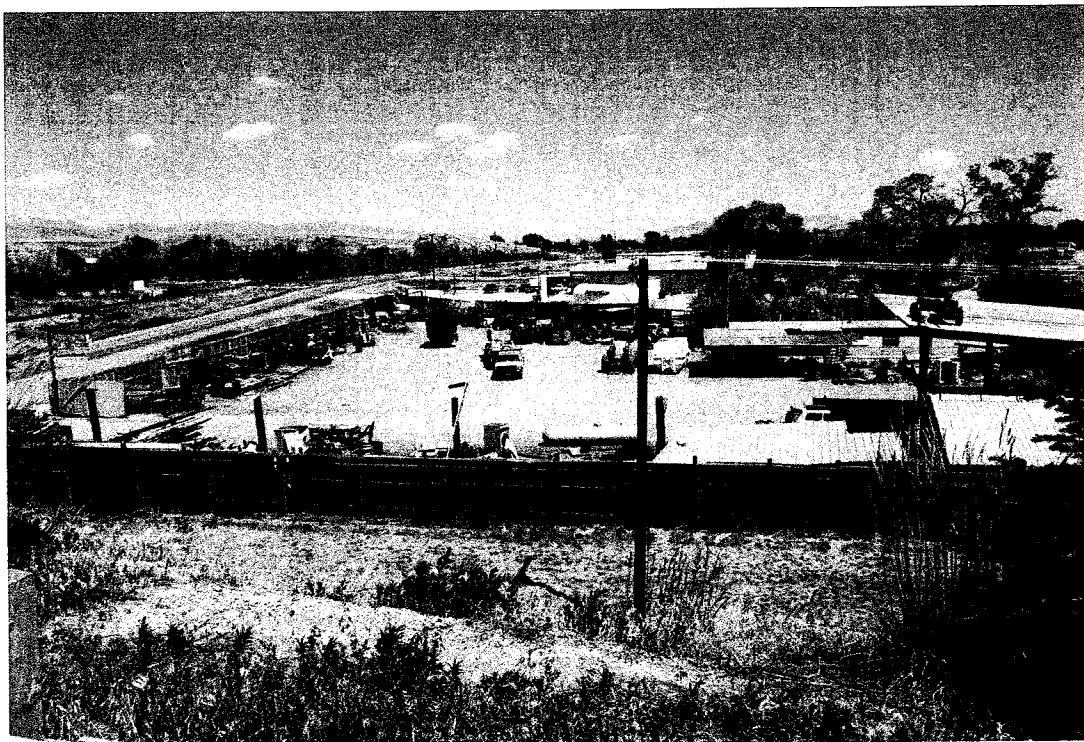
Stan Ozark, Chair
Tourism Advisory Council

Dillon, Beaverhead County

December 2007



July 2008



Butte, Silver Bow County

September 2003



October 2004

